

*Report of the Director of Wrocław Contemporary Museum
on the Museum's functioning in the years 2011-2016
submitted to the Museum Board during the annual meeting of the Board on 29 October, 2016*

Dear Members of the Museum Board of Wrocław Contemporary Museum,

The current makeup of the Museum Board was constituted by the Mayor of Wrocław on 23 July, 2014, for a four-year term of office. We have therefore reached the halfway point of the current tenure, and we are about to find out the Organiser's crucial decision concerning the appointment of the Museum's director for the tenure beginning on 1 January, 2017. On this occasion I would like to briefly summarise the period of the Museum's functioning that has been examined by the Museum Board during four meetings (including one extraordinary meeting). Despite sending invitations and agreeing the dates, none of these meetings, apart from the one inaugurating the functioning of the Board, was attended by the Mayor's representatives in the Board (Dr Jerzy Ilkosz, Jerzy Skoczylas and Director Jarosław Broda).

Let me briefly summarise this period, beginning by quoting some statistics about the Museum.

In the years 2011-2015, Wrocław Contemporary Museum organised **105** exhibitions at the Museum's seat in Wrocław, which were visited by **127,510** viewers, and co-organised **2** exhibitions of artists from Wrocław outside the city – at BWA Arsenal in Białystok and MOCAK in Cracow. In 2016 (from January to the end of September), we organised **17** exhibitions, which attracted over 30,000 people (for comparison: the number of visitors to the Museum in 2015 was **35,000**, and had been steadily growing since 2011). Outside Wrocław, the travelling exhibition "The Wild West. A History of Wrocław's Avant-garde" was shown (so far it has been seen by around **33,000** viewers, excluding an unknown number of visitors to the Budapest edition). Two smaller exhibitions are still being shown – "jet lag" at the Platan Gallery in Budapest, and "Daytime Sleep Somnolence" at the Polish Institute's Gallery in Dusseldorf; we have not received information about audience numbers at either show.

With respect to educational activities organised by the Museum, the number of people who participated in them was **26,372** (data for the period 2012-2015, excluding four months in 2011). This year, until the end of September, it was **2,080** people. The number of participants in educational activities has been more or less constant and oscillates at around **6,500** per year. The educational aspect of the Museum's functioning is supervised by one full-time employee – the educational curator, one permanent collaborator – Patrycja Mastej, and instructors working to commission.

The debates programme in the years 2012-2015 attracted **7,496** participants. In 2015, the average number of people taking part in one debate was **35** (in 2012, it was **26** people). The debates have been growing in popularity since 2012. From January to September 2016, the public programme of the Museum already attracted **1,623** participants. The Museum's programme of debates is run by one full-time employee – the curator of the public programme.

In the years 2011-2015, the Museum acquired through purchase or sporadic donations **214** artworks by **79** Polish and foreign artists, including **23** artists representing the Wrocław milieu, **24** other Polish artists, and **32** foreign artists. The total book value of these works is PLN 6,260,264.25.

Moreover, the Museum currently owns **1,294** archival units connected with Wrocław art, excluding the photography archive of outstanding photographer Elżbieta Tejchman, which the Museum has received as a donation. The number of archival objects may increase because professional archiving is currently in progress, which often results in separating individual archival objects from larger sets. The quick growth of the number of items in the Museum's collection was due to its participation in the "National Collections of Art" programme of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage; it was connected with an annual subsidy of the Ministry, which in 2014 and 2015 had to be matched by a 15% contribution of the Organiser (the Municipality of Wrocław).

The Museum has finished work connected with introducing an electronic inventory. It includes a register of artworks in the Museum's collection, the collection's inventory in a paper form (in accordance with the current regulations), and an online version of the collection available at muzeumwirtualne.pl. As I have mentioned before, work is currently being performed on the archival collection, which is much more complex due to its size. Two people are responsible for the inventorying of the artworks stored at the Museum – the chief stock taker and the head of the artworks storeroom, under the professional supervision of the collections curator – Dr Sylwia Serafinowicz, and in cooperation with MWW's conservator. The Museum also looks after artworks deposited by the Lower Silesian Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts (DTZSP), which, as of the end of 2015, numbers **502** pieces by **142** artist and **994** archival units. These quantities are given as of the end of 2015.

In the years 2011-2016, the Museum borrowed 592 works from the MWW collection and 353 works from the DTZSP collection (945 in total) and granted free licenses to publish the images of 143 artworks and archival materials from its own collection and 31 pieces from the DTZSP collection. We also carried out the conservation of objects in our collection, including works deposited by the DTZSP.

From 2011 to 2016, the Museum published or co-published **26** non-serial publications (catalogues and books), **14** so-called Jednodniówkas (One-day Newspapers), and one guide to an exhibition (in connection with the exhibition of MWW collection in 2016).

When the Museum opened its doors to visitors in 2011, it employed five people, including the director. The current organisation of the Museum's work is based on 19 full-time employees. The following services are outsourced: visitor experience assistance, network infrastructure maintenance, OHS services, and legal services.

Important elements of the Museum's programme in 2011-2016

Since the first exhibition, the Museum has focused on working with the cultural environment and heritage of Wrocław and Lower Silesia, with respect to the subjects of the debates, educational activities, and exhibitions. First and foremost, we became involved in research on the history of Wrocław's avant-garde. Just several months after opening, still in 2011, we held a large, comprehensive exhibition titled "WroConcret. The History of Visual Text in Wrocław." This series also included the following shows: "Where Is Permafo?" (2012), "The Luxus Magazine" (2013), "The Avant-garde Did Not Applaud. Romuald Kutera / The Recent Art Gallery" (2014), and several smaller displays, such as "Under the Roofs of Wrocław", the first exhibition documenting Jadwiga Grabowska-Hawrylak's achievements (2012); "Stanisław Dróżdż. Ideas" (2014); or "Wacław Ropiecki

– The Travelling Gallery Archipelago” (2014). Each of them was accompanied by a thoroughly-prepared and well-researched catalogue. This series was summarised and expanded by the exhibition titled “The Wild West. A History of Wrocław’s Avant-garde”, which featured over 800 exhibits from the field of the visual arts, applied design, architecture, theatre, film and music. In 2015-2016, the exhibition was shown at the Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw, Kunsthalle Kosice, Kunstmuseum Bochum, the MSU Museum of Modern Art in Zagreb, and Museum Ludwig in Budapest. It was accompanied by a guidebook containing 354 pages, published in Polish, English and German language versions. Moreover, MSU Zagreb and Museum Ludwig in Budapest published abbreviated versions of the guidebook in the form of brochures in the local languages. Each presentation of the exhibition enjoyed huge interest of the audience and media (a report on the media presence of the Museum is attached to this report). The route of the exhibition was no accident – it followed the trail blazed by Wrocław artists in the 1960s and 1970s. Similar projects are planned for 2017, including exhibitions under the working titles “Wrocław-Gdańsk. The 1990s” and a presentation of the history of the Wrocław-based gallery Zakład nad Fosą, which functioned under the martial law. There are still many subjects in this area that require the attention of our Museum.

The second important aspect of the Museum’s functioning was cooperation with neighbouring countries from this side of the former Iron Curtain, with which Wrocław was in traditionally close contact. Thus the Museum acquainted the Wrocław audience with the oeuvre of outstanding Czech artists (Jiri Kovanda and Eva Kotatkova – 2013), Slovak conceptualism (“Soft Codes” – 2015), and its Croatian version (“New Art for New Society”, combined with an individual presentation of works by Vlado Martek – “The Boundaries of Language” – 2015). The contacts established in this area will probably result in a larger exhibition of Czech art and an exhibition featuring the group of artists from Pecs, who were associated with Wrocław artists and important for Hungarian art. Since each new project brings new contacts and greater expertise, MWW has a chance to specialise in art from Eastern and Central Europe.

The Museum has not neglected attractive exhibitions of renowned Polish and foreign artists coming from other parts of the world. This group includes Paweł Althamer, Yinka Shonibare, Laureana Toledo and Dr. Lacra, and the upcoming exhibitions of works by Tony Cragg.

The cultural identity of the place was the subject of the following shows: “Houses as Silver as Tents” (2014), “The Germans Did Not Come” (end of 2014 – beginning of 2015), or “Vot Ken You Mach? Contemporary Jewish Identities in Europe” (2015).

Taking into consideration the fact that we have organised 112 exhibition at the Museum’s seat, I could keep reviewing them. However, I would like to raise the issue of presenting the output of the younger generation of artists from Wrocław. MWW has occasionally prepared such exhibitions, whenever a project that was important, in our opinion, had been overlooked by other institutions in Wrocław (exhibition of works by Piotr Skiba – 2013, or Piotr Blajerski – 2014). Young artists from Wrocław were prominently featured at the annual exhibitions of new works acquired by the DTZSP, and student exhibitions – in the Aviaries project, which ran from 2011 to 2014 (ten editions). Photographers presented their oeuvre at exhibitions prepared by us or organised at the Museum’s seat by TIFF Festival, the Association of Polish Art Photographers, or different schools of photography from Wrocław. By the way, it should be noted that the list of institutions, schools, galleries, associations and foundations from Wrocław that the Museum has cooperated with over the years is

so long that enumerating all of them would take at least one page. Taking into account the programmatic scope of functioning of other institutions in the city, the Museum perceives its role primarily in terms of promoting the achievements of local artists outside Wrocław. Due to our international contacts established while working on our international collection of contemporary art, we are probably the best suited municipal institution to achieve this aim.

The Museum has fulfilled its statutory duties also by preparing permanent exhibitions of works belonging to its collection. On 23 July, 2013, we opened "Jerzy Ludwiński Archive", who created the pioneering, on a global scale, conception of "The Museum of Current Art in Wrocław" (1966). The artistic output of this critic and visionary had been the inspiration for the programme of Wrocław Contemporary Museum. Since 23 May, 2014, Stanisław Dróżdź's Aviary has been open. This outstanding avant-garde artist, who is commonly known for his attachment to Wrocław, had not been featured in any permanent exhibition in municipal institutions before. In connection with the opening of the permanent exhibition, pursuant to Art. 6 sections 3 and 4 of the Act on Museums, Wrocław Contemporary Museum sent two letters to the Organiser (9 April, 2014 – L.Dz.32/2014; 28 January, 2015 – L.Dz. 6/2015) concerning the change of the Museum's status from "museum-in-organisation" to "museum". Neither of the letters has been answered. We have also requested the introduction into the Museum's Statute of regulations concerning the appointment of the "Committee for Purchasing Artworks", pursuant to Art. 12 section 2 of the Act on Museums (letter of 28 January 2015). Due to the lack of cooperation from the Organiser, already on 24 November, 2014, I issued Ordinance no. 1/11/2014 on the appointment of the "Commission for the Purchase of Artworks for the MWW Collection", whose members included the MWW collection curator, the MWW exhibitions curator, and the Chief Stock Taker of the Museum. The ordinance formalised and sanctioned the actual state existing in the Museum since the creation of the position of the collection curator.

In conclusion I would like to quote the opinion of a well-known philosopher from Wrocław who visited us during the celebration of the fifth anniversary of creating the Museum on 2 September, 2016. When looking at a crowd of people enjoying themselves on the roof, he admiringly said that Wrocław Contemporary Museum is an exceptionally inclusive institution, whose functioning bridges different groups of Wrocław dwellers. On that day, over 1,500 people celebrated the Museum's birthday, who bought more than 400 publications prepared by us.

At the end I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the members of the Museum Board of Wrocław Contemporary Museum who contributed to the development of our institution.